

DWIGHT'S Journal of Music.

A Paper of Art and Literature.

VOL. V.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1854.

NO. 15.

Dwight's Journal of Music, PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

TERMS { BY MAIL, \$2 PER ANNUM, } IN ADVANCE.
" CARRIER, \$2.50 "

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J. S. DWIGHT,.....EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.
EDWARD L. BALCH, PRINTER.

OFFICE, No. 21 School Street, Boston.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED

At the OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, 21 School St.
By NATHAN RICHARDSON, 282 Washington Street.
" GEO. P. REED & CO., 13 Tremont Row.
" A. M. LELAND, Providence, R. I.
" DEXTER & BROTHERS, 43 Ave Street, N. Y.
" SCHARFENBERG & LUIS, 722 Broadway, N. Y.
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For half a square, (8 lines,) or less, first insertion, . . . \$0.50
" " " each additional inser. 25
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" " " each additional insertion, 50
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Payments required in advance: for yearly advertisements, quarterly in advance.

[Translated by the Editor.]

A Review of the History of Music before Mozart.

BY A. OULIBICHEFF.

(Continued from p. 107.)

Before Gluck and Mozart this error was excusable. The Italian opera was the best that was known, or rather it was the only one, which really was music. The friends of music therefore had no choice, and it is something altogether natural to take the best one knows, for the best that is possible. But if I hear to-day a national

opera music mentioned with a certain pride or a certain patriotic feeling, be it in what land it may, I really do not understand what is meant by it. There are two kinds of music, one of which is always confessedly national, and the other really so: these are popular melodies and the church song. The former, because they are a natural product and to a certain degree the expression of the inner life of the people that sings them, and consequently owe their power, their merit and their charm to this origin. They possess the virtue of making things present to us; a conjuring spell, to summon the dear and holy images of the fatherland before our souls, the moment we hear them in certain situations in which every one may sometimes find himself. The intrinsic matter of a melody exerts no influence on the power of the impression, which it can awaken as a national song. A Swiss organist, living far away from his mountains, will many a time prefer the *ranz-des-vaches* to all the preludes of Bach and Handel. And the same feelings more or less are stirred in every man, to whatever people he may belong, especially when he hears melodies, which recall certain spots that are dear to him above all others, or events with which they chance to be peculiarly associated in his mind.

Quite analogous reasons secure, or should secure the special organization of the church song among nations attached to their own cultus. This song may be good or bad music in itself; it passes for the best where it has long existed. Everywhere the spiritual melodies have identified themselves with the national religion; men know them from their childhood; they hear them at the most solemn stadia of life; in them lies the power of awakening even in the most indifferent souls the thought of a high and mysterious antiquity, the thought of something that is and was and ever shall be. If the hearers are not capable of appreciating a learned church composition as a work of Art, yet they feel it in the depths of their hearts as the expression of the Christian thought. Men, who assemble for prayer to God, do not hear music with the critical ear of a connoisseur, or with the fastidious ear of a dilettante. Even the best judges, if they are Christians, or have only a little taste, are offended by every distraction, which brings them too directly back to their profane enjoyments. A radical departure therefore from the church melodies, such as too frequently has been made in the eighteenth century and in our days, is nothing but a destruction

of a train of ideas operating in the most compact and powerful manner on the imagination; it is an outright destruction of the poetry of the national cultus. It is not necessary in any other way to establish this maxim, that church music in part derives its peculiarities and its power from its antiquity, whereas in the secular style the converse is the case; it commonly maintains itself only by its novelty.

Two branches of music, and indeed just the two extremes;—the people's song, in which Art stands at zero; and the sacred kind, upon which in some lands all the resources of Art are expended,—have thus the right and the necessity of being national, which fortunately exempts them from the tribute which other branches pay to fashion. But how do they manage to maintain themselves in this state of stability? As we have seen, by the association of moral thoughts, which they awaken, and which they possess the power of representing. Neither the edification, which Christians derive from the introduction of church music into their common congregations, nor the patriotic satisfaction, with which in certain circumstances we hear our country's song, are purely musical enjoyments. Armed with its peculiar property of conjuring up the memories, with which it is associated, and of enhancing our spiritual emotions, Music operates no more alone and through its own peculiar power, but also, and especially, as the vehicle of an activity of soul, of which it is only the mediate and secondary cause.

With the exception of the two cases in which the impression of music mingles with the national and religious feelings, there is no occasion to consider what it might gain by becoming German, Russian, French, or Italian, supposing it to rely wholly on its own resources. Is it not its most precious advantage over all spoken languages, that it is a universal language, the elements whereof lie in nature, and in the universal laws of the human organization, admitting, neither in a theoretic nor an aesthetic point of view, of any local tradition or differences between races? In the state of nature, Music is always special, because it is still very imperfect; the more perfect it becomes, the more universal does it seek to be. The universality, which is one of its essential attributes, is also the goal to which it must strive. Let us understand one another. By means of its intrinsic peculiarities Music corresponds to the different emotions of the soul only in a general

and, so to say, abstract manner. If the question be how to bring before the hearers the impression, or more strictly speaking, the musical equivalent of an emotion, our art presents no *object*, which can awaken this in us, as poetry and painting can; it applies neither mediating elements, nor artistic illusion; but it touches immediately the principle, out of which all the emotions of the kind in question flow. We hear two or three phrases of a melody, a harmonic series of some chords, and we say: These express joy, these despair, these love. This Music can do without the interpretation of a text, and without making use of the representative signification, which custom may have attached to certain melodies. The outward symptoms and the moral shadings, which modify the expression of passions according to manners, religious and social ideas, language and climate, belong to the domain of the literatures, of which they fix the necessary speciality or nationality. Music in itself possesses no means of expressing these; or if it sometimes succeeds in doing it, it is only through the association of ideas, of which we have above spoken. All such portrayings are enclosed in a purely psychological circle, and give never anything beside the human *Me*. What we call dramatic character, is for the musician never anything but the temperament or *nature* of the person, which verifies itself in the situations of the piece, and must be determined, not by what the person could do, say, think, or will, but solely by what it has the capacity to feel; and that because musical analogies answer indirectly to the interior and hidden springs of the passions, that is, to their principle. But this principle is the same with all men. And this is the reason why the empire of music embraces all countries, all classes of society, all stages of civilization, all degrees of intelligence, and stretches far beyond the geographical and intellectual limits, where the kingdom of the other arts leaves off. In theory, this universal intelligibility is the fairest prerogative of the composer; but in the practice of the theatre, he is continually forced to renounce it partially, whether he will or not.

Every nation, every epoch has its own taste, which it necessarily imparts to the musicians, whom it produces. This taste is in its nature special, and what is special never can be wholly harmonized with the expression of things absolute, as for example the human passions considered in their principle. Hence it follows, that the imitations of dramatic music have commonly only a relative worth, only a passing and local resemblance to objects represented, that is to say, to the feelings of the persons; a resemblance, which on the one hand constantly diminishes with the change in musical taste, and which on the other does not exist at all to a strange audience. The speciality of the taste of the times is a cause why music becomes antiquated, and the speciality of the local taste a cause which makes it less intelligible and less attractive in localities where a different taste prevails. When one sets out to give the universal language of feeling, he gets no farther than to produce the language of his time or of his hearers. But since the musicians cannot do otherwise, we will see how they contrive, as natives, to please the public and themselves. If one wishes to convince himself, he will find four ways of nationalizing or localizing the score of an opera.

The first and obviously the simplest way, is to bring the music to the mill of the national melody; then the opera becomes entirely national. Certainly, but then two little difficulties are in the way. There are countries, which possess no proper national melody; and then I scarcely know of any national melody, which is adapted to the various expressions of dramatic music, whether serious or comic. The cases, in which popular melodies are applicable to the lyric stage, belong always among the exceptions. Such is the case when the song is given for what it really is in the opera, or when the nationality of a people or an individual forms the subject of the piece. Thus WEIGL has with singular success employed Swiss airs in his opera, *Die Schweizerfamilie* ("The Swiss Family"), the subject of which is home-sickness. But such exceptions never can become the rule.

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The third means consists in systematically destroying the balance between the elements of an opera, in favor of one of them. When, for example, the declamation is sacrificed to the melody, the orchestra to the vocal parts, truth to material effect, expression to the *bravura* and the contrary, any one who knows these exclusive tendencies, who knows in what parts of the same the composers of a nation have distinguished themselves and what parts they are wont to slight, can judge of the music and say: That is French, German, Italian music.

Finally there is yet a fourth means, whose employment tends to make the national coloring most obvious. It consists in lending to the music a character corresponding to any peculiarity, or even to any particularly remarkable weakness, which distinguishes one people from another. We see for example, that what to-day makes the Germans the first musicians, the poetico-metaphysical genius of the nation, so favorable to the sublime inspirations of pure music, does not always lead them so well in the most positive application of this art, I mean the musical drama. We recognize this predominant tendency to the ultra-romantic and the hyper-original in some of their most celebrated operas; in their frequently too much enveloped songs; in intentions, which from their very fineness lose themselves in indefiniteness; in a certain mixture of repose and sentimental dreaminess, which unstrings the very hottest passions of their nature; in a knowledge which is not always very clear, or very dramatic; but everywhere we meet the stamp of reflection, of true originality and individuality, which marks all the artistic productions of the land.

In France it is quite otherwise, and even the Germans write there in an altogether different style. In the French opera, as it is now constituted, there is an evident striving to appear characteristic, to heighten effect by all means known or possible. Much display, which frequently resembles the mere glitter of gold tinsel; a lavish expenditure of passages and bravura pieces, sur-

passing even the Italian; an activity of instruments, which goes beyond even the Germans; male parts written in a vocal register, to make a physician shudder; song-parts of an expression in the highest degree French, half chivalric, half gasconne; a rhythm, which moves or runs in even pace with the country itself; a charlatanism in modulations from one key to another, a multitude of dramatic and very beautiful effects, little depth, almost no originality:—that is what I have fancied I discovered in reading through the works of the most celebrated opera writers of our time.

In Italy the national physiognomy, which from of old has mirrored itself most manifestly in the Opera, lies in dilettantism, in the passion itself for music. As born musicians, connoisseurs in all that concerns execution, neither better nor worse judges of composition than the great mass of the public elsewhere, indifferent to the dramatic development, but on the other hand as distinguished *orecchianti* (possessors of a musical ear), the Italians desire nothing of an opera but euphony, with a strong dose of noise (which they loved less at one time), fluent *roulades*, a pleasant tickling of the senses, an intoxicating thrill, a voluptuous warmth. With them the music conforms to the climate. The people of the North, as we know, loved to warm themselves by their glowing sun, and if to-day they cannot leave their homes to seek it, they try to supply this want by the glow of their music.

From our remarks it follows that of the four modes of indicating the local origin of an opera, all of which can be and are pledges of success with native audiences, there is not one, which in the judgment of a foreign and impartial connoisseur really denotes a fault, an imperfection, or indeed a negation in music. And yet most of the operas, indeed we maintain, all of them, range themselves under some one of these four categories. Moreover there is no branch of Art, in which tastes and opinions are so different as in dramatic music, and there is none, which has had so much to suffer from the times. There is only one opera, which rises above all influences of time and local relations, and at an immeasurable height rules the remotest and most splendid regions of unmixed psychology. This no nation can claim as its exclusive property. The text is Italian, the subject Spanish, the composer a German; for one must choose some language wherein to write a theatrical piece, the action must occur in some place and the musician be born somewhere. But as regards the score, the approbation of the world, which agrees in recognizing it as the first masterpiece of the lyric stage, and a half century, which seems only to have enhanced every one of its beauties, have settled it that the score is neither exclusively German, nor Italian, Spanish, Russian nor French. It is universal!

All my readers have named this opera, and while they named it, they will have understood why I touched upon a subject, which does not for a moment interrupt the thread of our historical considerations, because it is essentially connected with the goal to which I am tending. We shall now see what fate awaited the opera in France.

The difference in its fate among the Italians and the French is fully explained by the difference of the two peoples. The first were the most musical people in Europe; the second the best versed in literature of any in the seventeenth

century. This fundamental distinction must have reversed the mutual relations between the three classes of producers, coöperating in the production of an opera, and have led each of the two nations to results diametrically opposite.

When the musical drama was introduced into France under Cardinal Mazarin, there was as yet no French music. What LULLI had till then composed, was in about the same *genre* in which PERI and CACCINI had written, to whom Lulli was superior only in his overtures and his dance airs, which for a long time passed for models in all Europe and which even Italy borrowed of him. But soon the Italians got the start of him; they began to sing, while the French went on psalmodizing, for which we cannot reasonably reproach them. In music they were yet a people in its childhood; they wanted historical antecedents; they possessed neither composers nor singers; and for the little knowledge that was diffused among them, they were indebted to foreigners, whose debtors they have remained to our day for the sum total of the advances, which have made their lyric-dramatic school illustrious in noble or serious operas. It was the fortune of this school to be born in the lap of barbarism and to remain there for a long time through the want of native talents. When the Italians took that splendid upward flight, which placed them so high in melodic composition and in the art of singing, while it removed them more and more from the conditions of the drama, the French were not able to follow them. As an ingenious people however, they made a virtue of necessity and found a glory in wounding the ear from principle; out of vanity and thirst for distinctions of all kinds, they honored with the name of a national music the newly revived Florentine song-speech, which the Italians had long since given up, and which moreover was no music. But while the French naturalized among them this intolerable reciting manner, they closed a no less loyal compact with the rational principle, which had called the same into life. The idea of the founders of the lyric drama could not become lost in the land of a CORNEILLE and a RACINE, as it did in Italy. Cast upon the then so classic French ground, it lay long buried as a precious seed; at last it sprang up and the harvest turned out all the fairer for the long time they had had to wait for it.

I am firmly convinced that the hearers of the old French opera looked for nothing in it but dramatic excitements and the dance; for, we cannot too often repeat it, the Florentine psalmodizing, or what is scarcely better, the recitative of Lulli and Rameau could never have inspired much interest in any one as music. It pleased in France as a sort of strengthening of the effect. Here they were accustomed to the shockingly false screech of the singers; the ear was as yet so uncultivated, that no one was offended by it; and hence this very scream, this *urlo Francese* (French howl) was received only as the exalted expression of the passions. That musical enjoyment, which the audiences sought not in the dramatic music, but which one cannot quite dispense with in the opera, they found in airs, which were danced to, in which there is always some rhythm and some melody, that is to say, something true and answering to the hearer's power of comprehension. Hence *Ballets* and *Divertissements* were always inseparable from musical tragedy. Even to-day they hold fast to these, while the friends

of music would gladly dispense with such auxiliaries.

The principle of lyric-dramatic truth prevailed thus from the outset in the grand Opera; but foreigners never suspected it, since it was applied in almost as bad a manner as in the time of Giovanni Bardi. Foreigners, who understood something of music, did not comprehend this exhibition; they heard nothing but a long, monotonous Jeremiad without melody or rhythm, in which it was impossible to distinguish the recitatives from the *arioso*, and which was rendered still more intolerable by an ear-splitting execution, a Gothic droning, laughable embellishments, and bleating cadences. The natives, upon whom the thing made quite a different and a purely dramatic impression, declared with a contemptuous smile that strangers were not up to the level of their opera.

This state of things brought about, as we have already remarked, relations and consequences wholly the reverse of those, which marked the development of the musical drama with the Italians. The poet, from whom the public expected its chief enjoyment, and who reaped glory from a well elaborated opera text as well as from a good tragedy, kept even pace with the composer, if he did not even get before him. The composer, for whom the choice of the poem or the kind of verse was the most indifferent matter in the world, since his music adapted itself equally well, that is to say equally badly, to every kind, could not seriously fall out with the author of the words. Still less so with the singers. These possessed in the highest degree what was necessary, to execute all that was not song; and since no one thought of offering them such, they took up a score with the same docility or the same indifference, with which the composer took up the poem. What cared they whether the notes were put together so or so? Their art limited itself to the taking points of the French song: to the *portamento*, the *amoroso*, the *trillo*, &c.; and these tricks were employed throughout, as well as the scream. Thus in France poets, musicians and singers lived in sweetest harmony, one in their interests, their means, their end. The order, in which we have named them, marked the degree of their respective consequence. With the Italians the relation was precisely the reverse, and transformed the poet into a hod-carrier, the *maestro* into a slave and the singers into despots. Hence a contrasted and striking result in the history of the lyric theatre with these two nations. In Italy an opera never outlived the accidental assemblage of the singers, for whom it was written; it lasted just one *stagione* or theatrical "season." In France whole generations of singers succeeded one another in the poems of Quinault and the music of Lulli. It required no less a man than Gluck, to consign to the final repose of the grave this musical mummy, which had held possession of the throne of the Grand Opera since its foundation.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, a troop of comic opera singers brought into France the taste for the true music, which needs only to present itself to make proselytes at once. The men of sense, as Mozart used to express it, the real friends of music, felt at once, that this was the enjoyment, which they had vainly sought in the National Opera; but such men were at that time rare in the land and their enthusiasm,

which with the French is always inseparable from the spirit of propagandism, had to encounter fearful opposition. The good patriots, who had no ears, made it a duty to drive back the invasion of the foreign music; the Grand Opera caballed; the comic opera singers were sent away. Their stay in France nevertheless bore its fruits. Young musicians of talent, PHILIDOR, MOSSIGNY and GRETRY sought in their comic operas to imitate the style of the *Serca padrona*, which had so enchanted the amateurs in the Italian theatre. These happy attempts, which gradually accustomed the French ears to true music, feeble as they were, prepared the arrival of GLUCK, whom musical Tragedy awaited ere she stepped into the place of the false idol which had represented her for more than a century and a half.

[To be continued.]

A Visit to Mendelssohn.

By H. F. CHORLEY.

There are many besides myself to whom Germany and German music are gravely, perhaps irreparably, changed by the untimely death of Mendelssohn. I passed the three last days of August, 1847, beside him at Interlachen, in Switzerland, very shortly before his return to Leipsic, and that fatal attack of illness which ended in his death there on the 4th of November. He looked aged and sad, and stooped more than I had ever before seen him do; but his smile had never been brighter, nor his welcome more cordial.

It was early in the morning of as sunny and exhilarating a day as ever shone on Switzerland that we got to Interlachen; and then and there I must see the place and its beauties. "We can talk about our business better out of the house;" and forth we went, at first up and down under the walnut trees in sight of the Jungfrau, until, by degrees, the boarding-houses began to turn out their inhabitants. Then we struck off through the wood to a height called, I think, the Hohenbühl, commanding the lake of Thun, and the plain with Neuhaus and Unterseen, with the snow mountains round us. It was while we were climbing up to this nook that the tinkling of the cow-bells, which adds to rather than takes away from the solitude of mountain scenery, came up from some pasture land not far off. My companion stopped immediately, listened, smiled, and began to sing a passage from the overture to *Guillaume Tell*. "How beautifully Rossini has found that!" he exclaimed. "All the introduction, too, is truly Swiss. I wish I could make some Swiss music. But the storm in his overture is very bad." And he went off again into the pastoral movement; speaking afterwards of Swiss scenery with a strength of affection that almost amounted to passion. "I like the pine trees, and the very smell of the old stones with the moss upon them." Then he told, with almost a boyish pleasure, of excursions that he had taken with his happy party of wife and children. "We will come here every year, I am resolved. How pleasant it is to sit talking on this bench, with the glorious Jungfrau over there, after your Hanover Square rooms in London!"

But Mendelssohn must needs be drawn back into the concert room, even at Interlachen. A new composition for the opening of the magnificent Concert Hall in Liverpool had been proposed to him; and this was to be talked over. He had already a new cantata in view, I think, for Frankfurt; and mentioned some text from *Die Hermannschlacht* of Klopstock, as the subject which he had selected. "But that," he said, with his own merry laugh, "would never do for Liverpool. No; we must find something else." He spoke of Napoleon's passage of the Alps as an event he wanted to see arranged for music, again repeating, "I must write something about this country; but that, again, will not do for England!" I mentioned Wordsworth's ode on "The Power of Sound," as a noble poem full of

and, so to say, abstract manner. If the question be how to bring before the hearers the impression, or more strictly speaking, the musical equivalent of an emotion, our art presents no *object*, which can awaken this in us, as poetry and painting can; it applies neither mediating elements, nor artistic illusion; but it touches immediately the principle, out of which all the emotions of the kind in question flow. We hear two or three phrases of a melody, a harmonic series of some chords, and we say: These express joy, these despair, these love. This Music can do without the interpretation of a text, and without making use of the representative signification, which custom may have attached to certain melodies. The outward symptoms and the moral shadings, which modify the expression of passions according to manners, religious and social ideas, language and climate, belong to the domain of the literatures, of which they fix the necessary speciality or nationality. Music in itself possesses no means of expressing these; or if it sometimes succeeds in doing it, it is only through the association of ideas, of which we have above spoken. All such portrayings are enclosed in a purely psychological circle, and give never anything beside the human *Me*. What we call dramatic character, is for the musician never anything but the temperament or *naturel* of the person, which verifies itself in the situations of the piece, and must be determined, not by what the person could do, say, think, or will, but solely by what it has the capacity to feel; and that because musical analogies answer indirectly to the interior and hidden springs of the passions, that is, to their principle. But this principle is the same with all men. And this is the reason why the empire of music embraces all countries, all classes of society, all stages of civilization, all degrees of intelligence, and stretches far beyond the geographical and intellectual limits, where the kingdom of the other arts leaves off. In theory, this universal intelligibility is the fairest prerogative of the composer; but in the practice of the theatre, he is continually forced to renounce it partially, whether he will or not.

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passing even the Italian; an activity of instruments, which goes beyond even the Germans; male parts written in a vocal register, to make a physician shudder; song-parts of an expression in the highest degree French, half chivalric, half gascon; a rhythm, which moves or runs in even pace with the country itself; a charlatanism in modulations from one key to another, a multitude of dramatic and very beautiful effects, little depth, almost no originality:—that is what I have fancied I discovered in reading through the works of the most celebrated opera writers of our time.

In Italy the national physiognomy, which from of old has mirrored itself most manifestly in the Opera, lies in dilettantism, in the passion itself for music. As born musicians, connoisseurs in all that concerns execution, neither better nor worse judges of composition than the great mass of the public elsewhere, indifferent to the dramatic development, but on the other hand as distinguished *orecchianti* (possessors of a musical ear), the Italians desire nothing of an opera but euphony, with a strong dose of noise (which they loved less at one time), fluent *roulades*, a pleasant tickling of the senses, an intoxicating thrill, a voluptuous warmth. With them the music conforms to the climate. The people of the North, as we know, loved to warm themselves by their glowing sun, and if to-day they cannot leave their homes to seek it, they try to supply this want by the glow of their music.

From our remarks it follows that of the four modes of indicating the local origin of an opera, all of which can be and are pledges of success with native audiences, there is not one, which in the judgment of a foreign and impartial connoisseur really denotes a fault, an imperfection, or indeed a negation in music. And yet most of the operas, indeed we maintain, all of them, range themselves under some one of these four categories. Moreover there is no branch of Art, in which tastes and opinions are so different as in dramatic music, and there is none, which has had so much to suffer from the times. There is only one opera, which rises above all influences of time and local relations, and at an immeasurable height rules the remotest and most splendid regions of unmixed psychology. This no nation can claim as its exclusive property. The text is Italian, the subject Spanish, the composer a German; for one must choose some language wherein to write a theatrical piece, the action must occur in some place and the musician be born somewhere. But as regards the score, the approbation of the world, which agrees in recognizing it as the first masterpiece of the lyric stage, and a half century, which seems only to have enhanced every one of its beauties, have settled it that the score is neither exclusively German, nor Italian, Spanish, Russian nor French. It is universal!

All my readers have named this opera, and while they named it, they will have understood why I touched upon a subject, which does not for a moment interrupt the thread of our historical considerations, because it is essentially connected with the goal to which I am tending. We shall now see what fate awaited the opera in France.

The difference in its fate among the Italians and the French is fully explained by the difference of the two peoples. The first were the most musical people in Europe; the second the best versed in literature of any in the seventeenth

century. This fundamental distinction must have reversed the mutual relations between the three classes of producers, coöperating in the production of an opera, and have led each of the two nations to results diametrically opposite.

When the musical drama was introduced into France under Cardinal Mazarin, there was as yet no French music. What LULLI had till then composed, was in about the same *genre* in which PERI and CACCINI had written, to whom Lulli was superior only in his overtures and his dance airs, which for a long time passed for models in all Europe and which even Italy borrowed of him. But soon the Italians got the start of him; they began to sing, while the French went on psalmodizing, for which we cannot reasonably reproach them. In music they were yet a people in its childhood; they wanted historical antecedents; they possessed neither composers nor singers; and for the little knowledge that was diffused among them, they were indebted to foreigners, whose debtors they have remained to our day for the sum total of the advances, which have made their lyric-dramatic school illustrious in noble or serious operas. It was the fortune of this school to be born in the lap of barbarism and to remain there for a long time through the want of native talents. When the Italians took that splendid upward flight, which placed them so high in melodic composition and in the art of singing, while it removed them more and more from the conditions of the drama, the French were not able to follow them. As an ingenious people however, they made a virtue of necessity and found a glory in wounding the ear from principle; out of vanity and thirst for distinctions of all kinds, they honored with the name of a national music the newly revived Florentine song-speech, which the Italians had long since given up, and which moreover was no music. But while the French naturalized among them this intolerable reciting manner, they closed a no less loyal compact with the rational principle, which had called the same into life. The idea of the founders of the lyric drama could not become lost in the land of a CORNEILLE and a RACINE, as it did in Italy. Cast upon the then so classic French ground, it lay long buried as a precious seed; at last it sprang up and the harvest turned out all the fairer for the long time they had had to wait for it.

I am firmly convinced that the hearers of the old French opera looked for nothing in it but dramatic excitements and the dance; for, we cannot too often repeat it, the Florentine psalmodizing, or what is scarcely better, the recitative of Lulli and Rameau could never have inspired much interest in any one as music. It pleased in France as a sort of strengthening of the effect. Here they were accustomed to the shockingly false screech of the singers; the ear was as yet so uncultivated, that no one was offended by it; and hence this very scream, this *urlo Francese* (French howl) was received only as the exalted expression of the passions. That musical enjoyment, which the audiences sought not in the dramatic music, but which one cannot quite dispense with in the opera, they found in airs, which were danced to, in which there is always some rhythm and some melody, that is to say, something true and answering to the hearer's power of comprehension. Hence *Ballets* and *Divertissements* were always inseparable from musical tragedy. Even to-day they hold fast to these, while the friends

of music would gladly dispense with such auxiliaries.

The principle of lyric-dramatic truth prevailed thus from the outset in the grand Opera; but foreigners never suspected it, since it was applied in almost as bad a manner as in the time of Giovanni Bardi. Foreigners, who understood something of music, did not comprehend this exhibition; they heard nothing but a long, monotonous Jeremiad without melody or rhythm, in which it was impossible to distinguish the recitatives from the *arioso*, and which was rendered still more intolerable by an ear-splitting execution, a Gothic droning, laughable embellishments, and bleating cadences. The natives, upon whom the thing made quite a different and a purely dramatic impression, declared with a contemptuous smile that strangers were not up to the level of their opera.

This state of things brought about, as we have already remarked, relations and consequences wholly the reverse of those, which marked the development of the musical drama with the Italians. The poet, from whom the public expected its chief enjoyment, and who reaped glory from a well elaborated opera text as well as from a good tragedy, kept even pace with the composer, if he did not even get before him. The composer, for whom the choice of the poem or the kind of verse was the most indifferent matter in the world, since his music adapted itself equally well, that is to say equally badly, to every kind, could not seriously fall out with the author of the words. Still less so with the singers. These possessed in the highest degree what was necessary, to execute all that was not song; and since no one thought of offering them such, they took up a score with the same docility or the same indifference, with which the composer took up the poem. What cared they whether the notes were put together so or so? Their art limited itself to the *taking* points of the French song: to the *portamento*, the *amoroso*, the *trillo*, &c.; and these tricks were employed throughout, as well as the scream. Thus in France poets, musicians and singers lived in sweetest harmony, one in their interests, their means, their end. The order, in which we have named them, marked the degree of their respective consequence. With the Italians the relation was precisely the reverse, and transformed the poet into a hod-carrier, the *mäestro* into a slave and the singers into despots. Hence a contrasted and striking result in the history of the lyric theatre with these two nations. In Italy an opera never outlived the accidental assemblage of the singers, for whom it was written; it lasted just one *stagione* or theatrical "season." In France whole generations of singers succeeded one another in the poems of Quinault and the music of Lulli. It required no less a man than Gluck, to consign to the final repose of the grave this musical mummy, which had held possession of the throne of the Grand Opera since its foundation.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, a troop of comic opera singers brought into France the taste for the true music, which needs only to present itself to make proselytes at once. The men of sense, as Mozart used to express it, the real friends of music, felt at once, that this was the enjoyment, which they had vainly sought in the National Opera; but such men were at that time rare in the land and their enthusiasm,

which with the French is always inseparable from the spirit of propagandism, had to encounter fearful opposition. The good patriots, who had no ears, made it a duty to drive back the invasion of the foreign music; the Grand Opera caballed; the comic opera singers were sent away. Their stay in France nevertheless bore its fruits. Young musicians of talent, PHILIDOR, MONSIGNY and GRETRY sought in their comic operas to imitate the style of the *Sera padrona*, which had so enchanted the amateurs in the Italian theatre. These happy attempts, which gradually accustomed the French ears to true music, feeble as they were, prepared the arrival of GLUCK, whom musical Tragedy awaited ere she stepped into the place of the false idol which had represented her for more than a century and a half.

[To be continued.]

A Visit to Mendelssohn.

By H. F. CHORLEY.

There are many besides myself to whom Germany and German music are gravely, perhaps irreparably, changed by the untimely death of Mendelssohn. I passed the three last days of August, 1847, beside him at Interlachen, in Switzerland, very shortly before his return to Leipsic, and that fatal attack of illness which ended in his death there on the 4th of November. He looked aged and sad, and stooped more than I had ever before seen him do; but his smile had never been brighter, nor his welcome more cordial.

It was early in the morning of as sunny and exhilarating a day as ever shone on Switzerland that we got to Interlachen; and then and there I must see the place and its beauties. "We can talk about our business better out of the house;" and forth we went, at first up and down under the walnut trees in sight of the Jungfrau, until, by degrees, the boarding-houses began to turn out their inhabitants. Then we struck off through the wood to a height called, I think, the Hohenbühl, commanding the lake of Thun, and the plain with Neuhaus and Unterseen, with the snow mountains round us. It was while we were climbing up to this nook that the tinkling of the cow-bells, which adds to rather than takes away from the solitude of mountain scenery, came up from some pasture land not far off. My companion stopped immediately, listened, smiled, and began to sing a passage from the overture to *Guillaume Tell*. "How beautifully Rossini has found that!" he exclaimed. "All the introduction, too, is truly Swiss. I wish I could make some Swiss music. But the storm in his overture is very bad." And he went off again into the pastoral movement; speaking afterwards of Swiss scenery with a strength of affection that almost amounted to passion. "I like the pine trees, and the very smell of the old stones with the moss upon them." Then he told, with almost a boyish pleasure, of excursions that he had taken with his happy party of wife and children. "We will come here every year, I am resolved. How pleasant it is to sit talking on this bench, with the glorious Jungfrau over there, after your Hanover Square rooms in London!"

But Mendelssohn must needs be drawn back into the concert room, even at Interlachen. A new composition for the opening of the magnificent Concert Hall in Liverpool had been proposed to him; and this was to be talked over. He had already a new cantata in view, I think, for Frankfurt; and mentioned some text from *Die Hermannschlacht* of Klopstock, as the subject which he had selected. "But that," he said, with his own merry laugh, "would never do for Liverpool. No; we must find something else." He spoke of Napoleon's passage of the Alps as an event he wanted to see arranged for music, again repeating, "I must write something about this country; but that, again, will not do for England!" I mentioned Wordsworth's ode on "The Power of Sound," as a noble poem full of

pictures, from which, perhaps, portions might be detached fit for a composer's purpose; but he seemed to treat the idea of describing the various effects of music in music as too vague and hackneyed; and, moreover, objectionable, as having been done completely by Handel, in his "Alexander's Feast." Then he began to fear that he could get nothing ready by the time mentioned; "for you know," he went on, "something of mine is to be sung in the Dom, at Cologne, when the nave is thrown open. That will be an opportunity! but I shall not live to see it!" and he paused and put his hand to his head, with a sudden expression of weariness and suffering.

He had composed much music, he said, since he had been at Interlachen; and mentioned that stupendous quartet in F minor, which we have since known as one of the most impassioned outpourings of sadness existing in instrumental music—besides some English service-music for the Protestant church. "It has been very good for me to work," he went on, glancing for the first time at the great domestic calamity (the death of Madame Hensel) which had struck him down, immediately on his return from England; "and I wanted to make something sharp, and close, and strict (interlacing his fingers as he spoke), so that church music has quite suited me. Yes, I have written a good deal since I have been here; but I must have quiet, or I shall die!" I will not swear to the very order of words which Mendelssohn spoke, but that day is too brightly printed in my memory for a topic, or a trait, or a characteristic expression to be forgotten. Life has too few such. In answer to my inquiries concerning the opera on which he was understood to be engaged, he spoke long and freely concerning the theatre, and his own plans and purposes with respect to it. "The time has come when I must try what I can do," was his language, "and after I have written four or five operas, perhaps I shall make something good. But it is so difficult to find a subject." Then he discussed many which had been proposed to him: speaking in the strongest manner of the unauthorized use of his name, which had been made in London by announcing "The Tempest" as having been commenced by him with a view to its performance at a given period. "The book is too French," he said, "and the third act is thoroughly bad. I would not have touched the opera till all that had been altered. And I never would tie myself to time in such a hasty manner. No; when I have finished something, I dare say I shall get it produced somewhere." He then went on to talk over other Shaksperian subjects; in particular, "The Winter's Tale," a sketch from which had been laid before him: this seemed in some degree to have engaged his liking. "Something very merry," said he, "could be made with Autolycus." How merry he could have made it, the world has since learned by the publication of his operetta, in which the knavish "Pedlar Kaus" plays so notable a part. Truer comedy does not exist in German music, not even in the most comical portions of Mozart's *Die Entführung*, than the dancing song of this precious knave, or the part taken by him in the serenade of the village girl, with its sentimental caricature of the German watchman's droning call. "We have no one in Germany who can write opera books," Mendelssohn continued. "If Kotzebue had been alive—he had ideas!" and he warmed himself up as he talked, by recalling how a prosaic occasion of mere parade, the opening of the new theatre at Pesth, could inspire Kotzebue with such a characteristic invention as his "Ruins of Athens," so good for Beethoven to set. "Well, I must do my best with *Loreley*, for Geibel has taken great trouble with the poem. We shall see." And then, again, he broke off suddenly, and put his hand to his head. "But what is the use of planning anything? I shall not live."

Who could attend to such a foreboding in one apparently so full of energy, and forecast, and enterprise? I confess that I ascribed it mainly to the impression left by the fearful trial which Mendelssohn had recently sustained in the loss of the sister to whom he was so tenderly attached. Other painful ideas seemed to rise before him.

He spoke with more fear than hope of the fermenting state of opinion in Germany, and its disastrous influences upon morals, education, good citizenship, on all that keeps society sound and home happy. He dwelt on the impatience of duty, on the sympathy shown to error and licence, on the disregard of obligation, on the difficulties preparing for Germany by such perverse and preferred lawlessness among the middle classes, with tears in his eyes; for never was man of any country more sincerely, affectionately national. He spoke, too, and bitterly, of the folly and falsehood of those in high places, who had alienated the hearts which they might so easily have attached, and who had demoralized under pretext of educating a great people, giving illustrations, instances, anecdotes (which I need not say are sacred), with a nervous earnestness which showed how seriously and apprehensively his bright and quick mind had been at work on these subjects. Then he turned to his own future plans. I had often before heard him discuss that point in every artist's career, at which retirement from close personal intercourse with the public is desirable, but never so emphatically as that day. He was determined to give up presenting himself to the public so freely as he had done. "When one is no longer young, one should not go about playing and concert giving;" and he expressed a strong wish, almost amounting to an intention, of settling down somewhere in the Rhine land, not in any town, there to devote himself more eagerly than ever to composition. "I shall be near England," he added, "and can come over as often as you wish and I shall be within reach of our towns, with all these new railroads; but I must live quietly, and get rid of all that noise and interruption, if I am to live." And again was repeated the mournful presage; and the glow faded from his face, and the sad, worn look came back which it pained the very heart to see.

Later in the day I was shown with eager pleasure, the drawings made by him at Interlachen; for he drew landscapes faithfully, if not altogether gracefully, though in color "that green" was owned by him to be a stumbling-block. I was shown, too, his piano, "a shocking thing," as he called it; "but I am so glad that there is no decent piano in Interlachen. This will do to try a chord when I want it, but I do not wish to make finger-music." And he touched it—the last time that I heard him touch a piano—that I might hear what an old kettle it was. We were bound for Fribourg; and I asked him much about Mooser's famous organ. He said that he had heard wonders concerning its *vox humana* stop. "How odd," he continued, "that such an expressive thing, which can almost talk, should be made merely of two bits of wood." I pressed him earnestly to go on with us, and try this marvel for himself. "No," he said laughingly, "those organists always like no one to play but themselves. There is always some difficulty; and then there is the noise! I must give up organ playing; and besides, winter is coming, and we had better draw quietly homewards." There was some talk too of his being obliged soon to make a professional journey to Vienna, which further limited his time. In short, never had I seen him so full of plans; and surely never, in the annals of any art, had artist more honorably arrived at well-merited and universal fame. Vanity of vanities!

[Conclusion next week.]

THE CHINESE MUSEUM. The destruction of the largest hall in Philadelphia by fire reminds us of a pleasant anecdote about its opening concert, from the pen of our friend Keyzer. It appeared in 1847, in the *Boston Transcript*.

AN UNTIMELY ENCORE.—Singers and instrumental performers generally like to be *encored*; but such a compliment, flattering as it may be, may once in a while come malapropos. When that magnificent Hall in the Philadelphia Museum was opened to the public, with a concert given by a fire company, the orchestra at the farther end occupied merely a temporary platform, placed between a stuffed elephant on the right, a rhinoc-

eros on the left, and a variety of smaller items behind—the whole affair being rather primitive. There were neither chairs nor benches, and every inch of the floor was taken up by a crowd of upwards of five thousand people. All went on smoothly enough until the beginning of the second part, when Mr. McW., the assistant of Mr. S., who was the treasurer and principal manager of the establishment, came in great consternation to inform Mr. S. that the floor was giving way, and that there was already a gap of six inches on the further end of the elephant. Mr. S. became paralyzed. What was to be done? There was only one outlet, and that led by a corridor to a long flight of stairs. If the alarm should get started, hundreds, in trying to escape, would be trampled down and many lives inevitably lost. They must be got out as soon as possible. "Tell Mr. Cross," said the manager, "to have the last piece on the bill performed." When Cross, the conductor, and his companions, were told the cause of this order, it may well be supposed that they were by no means inclined to prolong their breakneck position. The last piece on the bill was Martini's Laughing Trio: "Why sure there never met &c." a song not unknown to bygone generations, and one in which performers had exhausted and worn threadbare all the various modes of laughing. But on this occasion, both singers and conductor, by constantly looking at the gap, which in their imagination kept on increasing, originated in their fright a style of cackinnation, which was as effective as it was novel; indeed it seemed as if they were trying to coax the elephant into a guffaw, such laughing as it was: *Ha-ha-ha-hi-hi-hi!* with faces indicating sea-sickness rather than mirth. The effect was so ludicrous that the song at once called forth a general *encore*. The singers tried to get away, but the audience would not let them go, and kept on stamping with all their might. Poor Mr. S. was almost beside himself. Five thousand people working away with both feet and canes on a floor already sinking! There was no alternative but to sing and laugh again. It was afterwards found that the heat of the gas on the ground floor was concentrated upon a beam of green wood, which had shrunk and caused a trifling opening. W. K.

Music Abroad.

London.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.—Grisi had been ill, but was "as magnificent as ever," in *Lucrezia Borgia*. The interest in her farewell performances is intense. Besides her Norma and Lucrezia, she has been adding Meyerbeer's three great heroines to her list of conquests, and on the 24th appeared as Valentine, in the *Huguenots*. The *Times* says:

Excellent as was her Valentine, in all respects, on the first night she attempted the character in public, the years that have since elapsed have not been lost upon Grisi, who, always thoughtful and improving, has known how to elaborate and perfect it to such an extent, that it now stands forward in the catalogue of her most admirable delineations. . . . The audience was as enthusiastic as the artist was zealous. There seemed to be a sympathy between them, as though each was unwilling to part from the other. . . . And after all, what, even at this moment, are the failings of Grisi? What is there that makes her less than that which she was, amid so much that makes her greater? When we have said that some of the higher notes of her voice are not so clear and powerful, not so much at her command as formerly, and that in passages where fluent execution is demanded she no longer possesses the same facility and *aplomb*, we have literally summed up the account of damages that time has been able to effect upon her vocal powers. As an actress, she is grander, more impetuous, more impulsive, and, let us add, more finished, than she has ever been. Her talent is indeed extraordinary, her physical powers unprecedented, when it is considered that, after more than twenty years of incessant toil in the most wearing and fatiguing of professions (not to speak of her career in Italy before she visited Paris and London), so much of the pristine strength and so much of the early charm remain, and that the few points of "falling off" suggested by her actual performances, become insignificant if weighed in the balance with what has been preserved and matured by experience into the highest excellence attainable by the union of genius with art. In the Valentine of Saturday night we could

scarcely note, from one end to the other, a single mark of weakness or hesitation.

Mario, too, was "in fuller possession of his vocal powers than he has often been of late." Previous to this there had been performances of *Rigoletto*, and of the *Prophète* and *Don Giovanni*, with Viardot as Fides and as Donna Anna.

ROYAL OPERA, DRURY LANE.—The pleasantest event of the season has been the production by the German Company of Mozart's comic opera, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, which was composed in 1782, two years after his *Idomeneo*, at the request of the Emperor Joseph II., who was anxious to place German opera on the same footing with the Italian, then all the rage in Vienna. It was not only Mozart's first German opera, but the first German opera worthy of the name.

The story has very little interest. Constanze (Mme. Rudersdorf), a young Spanish lady, on her voyage to Sicily to be married to Belmonte (Herr Pecze), is taken by an Algerine corsair, sold to a Turkish Pasha (Herr Hölzel), and conveyed to his seraglio, in company with her maid Blonde (Mlle. Agnes Biry), an English *soubrette*, and Pedrillo (Herr Castelli), the servant of Belmonte. The Pasha becomes desperately in love with his new purchase, and would fain make her the queen of his harem. He woos her, however, with gallantry, in spite of Constanze's declaration that her heart is unalterably devoted to another. At the commencement of the opera, Belmonte, who has discovered where Constanze is imprisoned, gains an interview with Pedrillo, his old servant. Having won the Pasha's favor on account of some little skill he possesses in gardening, Pedrillo enjoys a greater amount of liberty than generally falls to the lot of slaves. The master and servant determine to run off with Constanze and Blonde, and escape to Spain in a vessel which Belmonte has engaged, and which is lying off the coast in readiness to receive them. This plan, however, transpires through the instrumentality of Osmin (Herr Fornes), a suspicious, overbearing, and impertinent old steward, in love with Blonde, who treats him with the greatest contempt. The Pasha, informed of their attempt to elude him, is at first highly exasperated, and threatens to have the lovers strangled. His generosity, nevertheless, finally overcomes his desire for revenge, and he gives the prisoners their freedom, to the great mortification of Osmin, who would have executed Belmont and Pedrillo, and retained Constanze and Blonde as inmates of the seraglio.

Mozart did his best to conceal the poverty of this groundwork by the richness and beauty of the superstructure; but he can hardly be said to have entirely succeeded, or we should not to this day see *Il Seraglio* more neglected even than *Così fan Tutte*. The music of *Il Seraglio* is exquisite throughout, though not precisely of that *ad captandum* quality which strikes the uninitiated audience at a first hearing. The songs are in strong contrast to those of *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, being much more florid, elaborate, and lengthy. The airs given to Constanze resemble, in some respects, those of the Queen of Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, and are nearly as exacting to the voice and written as high. A *bravura* song in act II., "*Martern aller Arte*," ranges up to D in alt, which the singer has to take several times in very difficult passages. "The music of Blonde is more graceful and simple, and the heroine and the *soubrette* are opposed with that consummate skill for which Mozart is remarkable in his operas, where the individualization of character is always a prominent feature. One of the freshest and most charming songs in the opera is the air for Blonde, in A major, at the beginning of the second act, *Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln*, which was charmingly sung by Mlle. Agnes Biry and loudly encored. The music, in short, of Constanze, is heroic, and that of Blonde alternately tender and lively, as they should be; and the two characters may be regarded as the forerunners of Donna Anna and Zerlina, in which the genius of Mozart, some years later, accomplished his greatest triumph. The music of Osmin is famous, graphic, humorous, and strongly colored, with perhaps more of the *vis comica* than that of any of the personages in *Figaro*—always excepting Antonio, the gardener, whose passages of triplets in the first *finale* are as irresistibly comic as anything in the *buffo* style. A deliciously quaint song, old-fashioned and half plaintive, *Wer ein Liebchen hat gefunden*, is one of the rarest bits in the opera. It was admirably sung by Herr Fornes, and the first verse encored. The concerted pieces are constructed with the greatest ingenuity and dramatic power.

The singers were all up to the mark, all perfect, and all excellent—each in his peculiar and individual style. The cast was altered a few days before the first performance, in consequence of the indisposition of Herr Reichardt. This was a serious loss to the musical effect.—*Mus. World*.

The *Huguenots*, in German, has drawn several full houses. Reichardt's Raoul is highly praised, as also Mme. Caradori's Valentine, Mme. Rudersdorf's Marguerite, and the Marcel of Herr Fornes.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.—The Théâtre Lyrique from Paris is still amusing the Londoners with the light comic

operas of Auber, Adam, &c. Adam's *Le Roi des Halles*, in which a great part of the dialogue consists of the street slang of Paris, and in which Mme. Cabel, the favorite, did not appear, drew but a thin house. M. Clapissou's operetta, *La Promise*, fared much better.

The plot is as slight as a plot may well be, even for the Théâtre Lyrique. A young girl, Marie, has promised her father on his deathbed to espouse Giromon, a sea captain advanced in years, who has been a benefactor to her family. Marie, however, has had a previous attachment for a young sailor named Petit Pierre, who returns from a long voyage just at the moment when the marriage with Giromon is about to take place. The first passion resumes its ancient sway, and Marie is determined to find some expedient by means of which she may break off the match with Giromon. The old sailor is extremely jealous; and, during his temporary absence, Marie, by a contrivance so silly that it is not worth describing, manages to compromise herself in the eyes of her betrothed, who, in order to save her from exposure, gives up his claims to her hand and insists upon her wedding his rival. The music of M. Clapissou, who has distinguished himself at the Opera Comique by *Gibby le Cornemuse*, *Le Cade Noir*, and other successful works, is light and pretty, sometimes ingenious, and, occasionally, really dramatic. Auber, of course, is the fountainhead whence he has drawn his inspiration.

In the cast of *La Promise*, the real force of the Théâtre Lyrique is transported to the St. James's Theatre. M. Junca, who plays Giromon, has a good bass voice, sings well, is an excellent actor, and gives the dialect of the south of France with unctuous and undeniable accent; M. Colson, the representative of Théodore—a rival of Petit Pierre, half fool, half knave, and all excoomb—is amusing and original; M. Laurent shows much intelligence in the part of Marie's lover; and Mlle. Girard, a clever singer and a lively actress, is very effective as the *soubrette* of the opera. But the life and soul of the whole is Mme. Cabel, whose Marie is one of the most piquant and charming performances we have witnessed. That this popular and gifted lady is not merely a mistress of the florid school of vocalization is proved by the manner in which she sings the little romance, *Il émit une fillette*. Nothing can be more simple and unaffected, and nothing more exquisitely expressive. Her quaint and pretty delivery of the phrase which occurs at the end of each couplet—"Dame on m'a raconté ça"—is indescribable. On the other hand, M. Clapissou has provided Mme. Cabel with quite as many difficult ornaments, *floriture*, and passages of *bravura*, as M. Adam, who has given her nothing else. All these, however, are in good taste; and the wonderful ease and grace with which they are executed invests them with a double charm.—*Times*.

CONCERTS.—The (old) PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY closed its season on the 19th ult. with Mendelssohn's Italian and Beethoven's C minor symphonies; Beethoven's piano concerto in E flat, played by Herr Pauer; the overtures to *Freyschütz* and *Jesonda*; and vocal selections from Mozart, Weber and Rossini, by Clara Novello and Sig. Belletti.

ELLA'S MUSICAL UNION continues to give classical quartets, quintets &c., to cultivated audiences, with Ernst, Molique, &c., as interpreters. But the critics take Mr. Ella to task for marring the classical purity of one of his programmes, by the introduction of Thalberg's *Mosae* and other new-school fantasias, played by Master Arthur Napoleon, "the Portuguese prodigy." The next time he had Charles Hallé for pianist, who added a concluding bouquet of piano solos to a programme otherwise composed simply of a quartet by Mozart, a trio concertante by Spohr, and a quartet by Beethoven. At the sixth concert Mlle. Claus put the finishing grace upon a like programme with solos from Mendelssohn and Chopin.

Mlle. CLAUS and Miss ARABELLA GODDARD, the young German and the young English pianist, have each given a concert, to the delight of the amateurs, and each evincing, for her early age, remarkable mechanical mastery and artistic comprehension of all the great pianoforte composers from Bach and Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, to Chopin, Liszt and Thalberg. The enthusiasm of the English critics about Miss Goddard, who is only nineteen, is almost unbounded.

MR. BENEDICT has had his Annual Concert, as usual thronged with auditors and exceeding every thing in length. All sorts of songs, duets, &c., from all sorts of operas, were sung by one after another of all the Italian, German, and native vocal notorieties in London; succeeded by copious selections from Benedict's own works, and finally by Rossini's *Stabat Mater* entire, with Grisi, Viardot, Bosio, Mario, Belletti, &c., in the solos! There were also various instrumental pieces, including Bach's triple Concerto, played by the three pianists, Benedict, Hallé, and Lindsay Sloper.

ENGLISH GLEE AND MADRIGAL UNION.—This excellent society, which was established with the object of preserving the models of English vocal part-writing from oblivion, gave its first concert for the season in Willis's rooms. The principal singers were Mrs. Enderssohn, Mrs. Lockey, Messrs. Lockey, Hobbs, and H. Phillips, who were assisted by an efficient chorus of four sopranos, four contraltos, three tenors, and five basses, with Mr. J. L. Hatton at the piano-forte. A very interesting selection of madrigals and glees from the works of Stafford Smith, Webbe, John Benet, Paxton, Knyvett, Ravenscroft, and Bishop, with a capital specimen of the modern glee, by Mr. L. Hatton ("The hunt is up"—founded on a passage from the diary of Sir Thomas More's daughter), was admirably sung, and keenly enjoyed by the audience. Among the best things was Dr. Cooke's lively glee, "Hand-in-hand," and Benet's charming and elaborate madrigal, "All creatures now are merry-minded" (one of the numerous lyrical apostrophes to the beauty and virtues of Queen Elizabeth, under the fancy name of "Orina"). These were sung to perfection, the strict attention to light and shade being as remarkable as the point and decision of the execution. Between the parts Mr. Hatton gave a remarkably good performance on the piano-forte of Handel's well-known air and variations, entitled "The Harmonious Blacksmith," from the *Suites de Pièces*, which was deservedly applauded.—*Times*.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JULY 15, 1854.

WANTED, at this office, copies of No. 4 of the present volume of the Journal of Music, (April 29, 1854.)

The Orchestral Proportions.

NEW YORK, July 3, 1854.

Dear Sir:—The just proportions of certain instruments in orchestras of a fixed number must, I suppose, be fixed and well ascertained; and yet I not only continually find orchestras differing in this respect, but it has never been my good fortune to meet with any satisfactory article, either in musical papers or books, which has given me clear ideas upon the subject. Nothing in fact to tell me what instruments are used to produce certain effects, and what to produce others. Such an article could not fail to be interesting to all amateurs, and yet it is one which critics seem always to avoid. I should like to ask you to write such an article; but if I ask for too much I fear I shall get nothing, and therefore the simple question (if it is simple) which I should like to put is this:

In an orchestra, of say forty performers, strings, reeds, and brass, what should be the proportion of each of these divisions; and what should be the proportions of the sub-divisions under each: e.g., under the division of strings, what should be the number of the double-basses, what of the violoncellos, what of the violas, and what of the first and second violins? And finally, would the proportions, whatever they may be, hold in a like ratio in an increased orchestra—for instance one of a double size?

By answering (if inclination should prompt) this question, you would confer an essential favor which will not soon be forgotten by

YOUR SUBSCRIBER.

ANSWER.—Want of time and room limits our answer, for the present, to the "simple" question;—although even that is not so very simple, for the reason that there are so many modifying circumstances and so many exceptional cases in the uses of an orchestra, which render the proportions variable, whether it be an orchestra of forty or of a hundred instruments.

1. Suppose the problem to be, with an orchestra of forty, to render the symphonies and overtures of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, &c. (For those of Haydn and Mozart even a smaller number will suffice, they being written for a smaller number of real parts.) The proportion of strings to reed,

brass, &c., should be about as 24 to 16, distributed say as follows:

First Violins	8
Second Violins	8
Violas (tenor)	4
Violoncellos	2
Double Basses	2
Flutes	2
1st and 2d Oboe	2
1st and 2d Clarinet	2
1st and 2d Bassoon	2
1st and 2d Horn	2
Trumpets	2
Trombones	2
Tympani, Triangle, &c.	2

40

A larger proportion of basses to violins is often desirable; and indeed the number of each class of strings must depend somewhat on the relative efficiency of individual performers; four *effective* violins upon a part more than counterbalancing eight feeble ones.

The strings, or *quartet*, as it is technically termed, compose the heart and vital nucleus, the foundation of the orchestra. These may (without adding to the wind band, as above stated,) be increased almost indefinitely, until we approach the dimensions of a colossal or "monster" orchestra. As a general rule, there can hardly be too many strings, provided their quartet be in itself well balanced.

The sixteen reed and brass instruments above named are enough, not only for an orchestra of forty, but for one of almost any magnitude, short of the monster orchestra for some great festival;—allowing, of course, for the occasional introduction of extra horns, as in the *Freyschütz* overture, no trumpets, trombones, tubas, and whatever instruments for special effects; as drums, cymbals and other "Janissary music," *ad libitum*, when a Jullien would astonish the multitude.

The un-uniformity in practice among the various orchestras, which our "Subscriber" has been used to hear, is owing, therefore, to three causes: to the unequal efficiency of individual performers on the same instruments; to the incidental effects, the various uses and abuses, (new ideas truly inspired, or fantastical caprices,) to which an orchestra is from time to time applied; and, in the great majority of cases, to the makeshift expedients of a conductor who has not enough materials at his command. In the latter case his orchestra is only a *quasi* orchestra, a more or less skilful and judicious abridgement, which to the apprehensive imagination of the hearer may yet serve very well to sketch out and suggest the full design of the composer. This category, in truth, exhausts nearly the whole of our good fortune (in this country), in the way of orchestral enjoyments.

The sin of misproportion in almost all our *quasi* orchestras is the excess of wind instruments, particularly of the brass. We have no room here to go into the special functions of each of these pastoral or war-like, mild or terrible members of the little tone-republic. Generally speaking, while the groundwork of the musical thought resides in the stringed quartet, they add a various coloring to the harmony; or they contrast and alternate their harmonic masses with the masses of stringed harmony; or they step into individual prominence in piquant *obligato* solo, duet or trio passages, where one of a kind makes a clearer and distincter impression than two or a

dozen would. Indeed the maximum of legitimate trumpet effect in almost any orchestra is reached by a single trumpet on each part, as first or second; and every one has seen how one little saucy piccolo or octave flute can splash a deluge of bright yellow over the most gaudy and colossal tone-picture of Jullien's largest orchestra.

From this it will be seen that no absolute numerical proportion can hold between the wind and the stringed members of an orchestra. Different uses require different proportions. It would be as hard to say how many instruments of each kind shall always compose an orchestra of a given number of men, as it would to say how much of each color a painter must use in every picture of a given character. Much must be left to the inspiration, tact and judgment of the composer, whether in colors or in tones. And (in the absence of explicit directions) the conductor should have genius enough, in sympathy with the composer, to contrive such combinations, according to the circumstances, as will most nearly realize the effects intended in the composition.

This, we are aware, is a very imperfect answer to our correspondent's questions; but its faults are (necessarily) those of omission. We design at earliest convenience to treat the subject more at length, and perhaps enrich our columns with what has been written by some of the best authorities. Meanwhile we may refer to the treatise by Berlioz on Instrumentation; to various essays by Fétis; and to the instructive and popular article about "The Orchestra," by William Henry Fry, which appeared a few months since in Putnam's Magazine.

New Music.

(From G. P. Reed & Co.)

ROSSINI. *Les Soirées Musicales*. No. 1. *La Promessa* (The Promise); No. 2. *Il Rimpicciolo* (The Reproof.)

The enterprising publishers could not do a better thing than reprint, as they have here commenced to do, that capital collection of eight Italian airs and four duets, commonly known as the *Soirées Italiens*, or "Evenings in Italy." They are among the most genial and characteristic of the separate melodies of Rossini. Several of them, like the "Tarantella," the "Venetian Regatta," *L'Orgia*, &c., must be already familiar to our readers through the singing of Belletti and others, and the piano-forte transcriptions of Liszt. The beautiful nocturno, for soprano and tenor, *Mira la bianca luna*, too, is one of the series. The two little *canzonette*, already issued, are graceful, sparkling little love melodies, though not the most interesting of the dozen. This edition is a neat and exact reprint of the European, with both the Italian words and a singable English translation by our townsman CHARLES J. SPRAGUE, Esq. Every cultivator of the best Italian melody will rejoice to own a full set of the *Soirées*.

OESTEN, THEODOR. *Case of Jewels*, No. 2. pp. 7.

Five more little pieces, (from the *Sonnambula*, Lortzing's "Peter the Great," Flotow's *Martha*, with a slow waltz, and a People's Song,) very simply arranged for beginners on the piano.

OESTEN, THEODOR. XII. *Caprices Elegantes*.

A series of more elaborate and fantasia-like pieces, yet of medium difficulty. No. 1 gives graceful variations upon *Die Elfen*, a favorite waltz by Labitzky.

TUCKERMAN, S. P. MUS. DOC. *Service for the Burial of the Dead*; a tribute to the memory of JONAS CHICKERING. pp. 16.

The composer had an inspiring theme, and he has treated it with reverent and true feeling, with dignity, simplicity and learning. The short introductory movement for the organ, in G minor, is solemn and unpretending, in strict four-part harmony. So is the four-voiced setting of the words: "I am the Resurrection," &c.; entirely appropriate and in the easy manner of one who is in the habit of carrying four distinct parts along together. After this he introduces a double chant, arranged from a single one, and the old hymns of "St. Mary's," and "Dundee;" when the original vocal harmony is continued to the words: "I heard a voice from Heaven;" and the whole is concluded on the organ by the Dead March from Handel's "Saul." All is chaste, plain and church-like, without admixture of sentimentality or nonsense.

(From Oliver Ditson, Boston.)

NOVELLO, VINCENT. (Composed or arranged). *Short Melodies for the Organ, principally for the softer stops*. No. 3.

The young organist will here find a variety of tasteful, expressive and truly classical voluntaries of moderate length. The present number includes a Benediction Piece, a canon (originally a round for four sopranos); an *Air thématisque* from Pleyel; an *Agnus Dei* from Novello's Mass in D; a lovely minor melody from J. B. Cramer; the Ambrosian Hymn from Spohr's "Consecration of Tones" symphony; a simple melody, by Novello; a short slow movement from Beethoven; a very interesting old Gregorian melody, variously harmonized by Novello, &c., &c.

CALCOTT, W. H. *Half Hours with the best Composers*. No. 1. *Von Weber*; 2. *Beethoven*; 3. *Mendelssohn*; 4. *Spohr*.

Number One is a very pleasant and well connected medley (for the piano) of favorite scraps from Weber, commencing with the opening horn passage and following mysterious chords in the overture to *Oberon*; and continuing with a slow theme from the first clarinet concerto, the "Mermaid's Chorus" from *Oberon*, the prayer from *Freyschütz*, the "Bridal Chorus" from *Oberon*, the brilliant Allegro from the "Jubilee Overture," and so on. The connecting links, concluding phrases, &c., are quite after the Weber manner. Playing it through is a pleasant way of recalling and making clear in the mind many things that have charmed us in the orchestra or opera.

KNOER, JULIUS. *Methodical Guide for Teachers of Music on the Piano-forte*. Translated from The German by G. A. SCHMITT. 16mo. pp. 64.

This excellent little book is a guide to teachers, to be used in connection with Knorr's revision of "A. E. Müller's Method," also published by Ditson and recently noticed in these columns. It is full of excellent hints, which not only aid the teacher in so directing the mechanical exercises of the pupil as to impart the "true artistic piano touch;" but which keep ever present to the mind the more inspiring aspects of the Art. At every stage of mechanical progress it indicates a list of the best compositions to be practiced, with a constant eye to the cultivation of taste and the formation of a true style. Indeed the book contains a full and admirable *catalogue raisonné* of the compositions which ought to enter into the musical reading of a pianist who would be at home in the whole history of his Art, from Bach and Handel down to Thalberg, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann and Heller. The earnest amateur and student will find this useful, as well as the teacher.

CASTLE GARDEN OPERA.—The novelty of the week has been the debut of Signora MARTINI D'ORMY, the new contralto, in the character of the Spanish gentleman, Amando di Gondi, in Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*. We heartily agree with Fry's remarks in the *Tribune* about this class of impersonations.

We wish we could speak from being interested in what she did, but we have a constitutional horror of seeing the worst of farces—that of women dressed in men's clothes—touching sword-hilt, challenging, and so forth, all in the harmonic tones of the sex—consecrated by nature to gentleness and love. Alboni even was a nuisance in such characters; they are utterly and irredeemably bad, running in the face of nature. In point of truth, they are not a remove from the lyrical monster of the Pope's chapel, and could only come of a nation whose political philosophy needs regeneration. Thus much for the feminine-man business on the stage, which should be, if we must have them, balanced with men, bearded and whiskered, doing the characters of Juliets and Violas.

Apart from this we would add that the new contralto has a face of singular intelligence—vivacious action, and an excellent voice. The song she sang—by the way the best melody of the opera—was roundly applauded; and at the close of the first act, the principal singers were all called for. We did not see the other acts, but would judge that Graziani excited his audience by his earnest style and capital voice, in the climax scene. The tenor gave his first air with great sweetness. Madame Bertucca-Martetzek is quite recovered, and performed with spirit.

MUSIC ON THE COMMON.—Our "city fathers" have again,—reluctantly, it would seem—provided a small modicum of summer evening music by way of refined recreation for the people. Two evenings in the week (Tuesdays and Fridays), small military brass bands take their turns in doling out dribbles of the hacknied Jullien splendors, (as if there could be one poor forlorn soul in this land whose memory needs to be refreshed upon the subject of the "Prima Donna Waltz!") together with the same half-dozen of better things that were played all last summer. Our hopes of the organization of a true, not military, but civic band, by the city for such purposes—a band of forty to fifty instruments, with a goodly share of reeds, instead of all brass—have been entirely disappointed. One would have thought the sound of Dodworth's band in our streets would have stimulated the ambition to attempt something quite as good or better; for even that was not quite perfect, a want of something being felt between the reed and tuba tribes.

But it is no fault of our musicians that they do not form larger and more composite bands. They act up to the patronage which they receive. They must perforce club together their forces in "small quantities to suit purchasers," relying as they do mainly upon the parades of military companies for their employment. It is time that the public, or those who in an official manner provide somewhat for the education and amusement, as well as for the health and order of the public, should call into being a complete band, for the adequate performance of good music (not excluding popular) on a scale that it can be heard by crowds in the open air, and which may be employed to lend a rhythmical charm to all peaceful public ceremonies, processions, &c., whether of a solemn or a festive character.

Would that be extravagant? Think then of the economy of blazing away thousands of dollars in an hour or two, on every Fourth of July, in senseless fireworks, and barbarous pistols, pop-guns and crackers, nourishing and stimulating the love for all sorts of disorder, insolence, vulgarity and violence. A small moiety of the money would people the Common every pleasant summer evening with delighted listeners to really fine music, and make the streets echo with the frequent sound of

strains that unconsciously refine and elevate the popular sentiment and taste.

BOSTON MUSIC HALL ASSOCIATION.—We accidentally omitted to mention certain changes which took place in the Board of Directors, soon after our report of the annual meeting in June. Not by way of news, but for convenience of future reference, we do it now. Immediately after the re-election of the old officers, the president, Charles P. Curtis, Esq., and Charles H. Mills, Esq., one of the directors, sent in their resignation, which was accepted, and their places, as well as that of the late Mr. Chickering, have been filled by the election of Messrs. C. C. Perkins, Eben Dale and E. D. Brigham. The Board is now composed as follows:

Directors, Dr. J. B. Upham, (Pres't), E. D. Brigham, Henry W. Pickering, Dr. George Derby, Eben Dale, Charles C. Perkins, R. E. Apthorp. Treasurer, John Rogers. Secretary, Francis L. Batchelder.

Advertisements.

HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE Association will meet in Cambridge on Commencement Day, on WEDNESDAY next, July 19th, at the house of Mr. SAUNDERS, (next to Christ Church,) at 1 o'clock, where a room will be open for Members during the day.

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MUSICAL NOTICE.

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References.

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REFERENCES:—Mrs. C. W. Loring, 33 Mt. Vernon St.

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Feb. 18.

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